

GOVERNMENT HOUSE CALCUTTA

1936



DAILY LIFE
AND
'WORK' IN INDIA

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ETC ETC.

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WITH FIFTY-NINE ILLUSTRATIONS

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To
MY
CHILDREN

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DAILY LIFE AND WORK IN INDIA.

CHAPTER I.

CALCUTTA.

BEFORE describing the people of Calcutta, it is necessary that a little should be said about the city in which they live, in order that some idea may be formed of their surroundings.

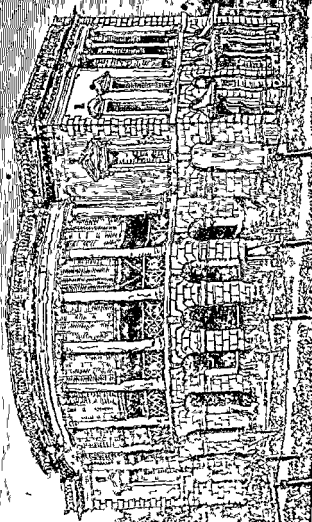
English people who have not travelled seem to have an idea that all countries must be like England, or, if unlike, necessarily inferior. But a stranger arriving in Calcutta is agreeably surprised to find himself in streets in many respects far prettier than those of most English towns; the trees on either side of the road, with their bright green leaves and gorgeous flowers, giving an appearance of country life even in the midst of a populous city.

The city of Calcutta stretches for a space of about seven miles along the bank of the river Hugli, a branch of the great river Ganges. Originally the stream flowed through another channel some two miles away, but, quite in harmony with the custom of rivers in India, it decided to change its course, and left the great temple at Kâli Ghât; which had been built on its banks, by the side of a narrow stream—the original bed of the Ganges. So convinced are the Hindus of

this fact, that for a considerable length of the river Hugli no Hindus are burned on its banks, because it is supposed to have lost its charm there; but above the part where this little stream leaves the larger one, and after it has again fallen into it, the dead are burned, in the certain hope of obtaining happy entrance into heaven by this act. The city, though long, is not much more than a mile wide, yet in this space about 700,000 people reside; or if those of the suburbs be added, they number over 1,000,000. The streets are mostly in the direction of the river, with others intersecting them at right angles; but there are some tortuous narrow lanes that would equal those of almost any English town. The city is perfectly flat, the only even slightly rising ground being the approaches to bridges over the narrow stream above mentioned.

The river Hugli, by which Calcutta is reached, is most difficult for navigators. There are immense sand-banks, which, constantly shifting, render it necessary to keep men always employed in taking soundings, who send up reports of the position of these banks to the city several times a day for the guidance of the pilots. A safe channel to-day may be dangerous to-morrow. I shall not forget the sense of danger that was produced when sailing up the river for the first time. At two places men stood hatchet in hand to cut the lawser by which our vessel was being towed, so that, in case we touched the ground, the steamer might not be dragged down with the ship. I have heard of ships colliding near these sand-banks, being completely out of sight withi

On sailing up the river, the first one in nearing the city is the r



ALUIGAN TEMPLE IN CALCUTTA

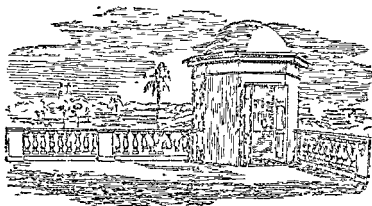
ruler of Oudh. When the British Government took possession of his territory he was brought to Calcutta, and a large tract of land, together with a handsome pension, was granted to him. In these grounds a number of houses have been built for himself and his numerous household. As some of these are of various bright colours—blue, green, red, &c—they look rather gaudy. Inside the grounds are beautiful tanks with marble steps, and the finest collection of water birds and snakes in India. He also keeps thousands of pigeons, and it is a most interesting sight to watch them flying about in large flocks. This is said to be one of the chief amusements of the king. The old man frequently goes out for a drive in an old fashioned chariot, attended by about twenty troopers. The men are very dirty, badly dressed, badly mounted, are poor riders, and most unsoldierly in appearance. The attendants of a third rate circus in a procession through an English village are quite respectable compared with this royal body-guard.

After sailing for a little longer, the next object of importance that comes in sight is Fort William, a large and strong defence. It was a most grateful sight, after sixteen weeks at sea, to catch sight of the Union Jack floating nobly from this fort, and to know that, though far away from England, we were still to live under British rule.

To give a clear idea of a city to those who have not seen it, is not easy. Still, I wish to try to enable those who have not visited Calcutta to have some idea of what it is like.

The city may be roughly divided into two parts—

the European and the Native; though in the native part some Europeans live, and in the European part some natives are to be found. The European part of the city covers about a square mile. Here are to be found the fine houses that have given to Calcutta the name of "The City of Palaces." These buildings are all detached, each standing in its own grounds. They are built of brick, and plastered; so that every few years it is necessary for the plaster to be repaired, and a new coat of colour given to the whole.



FLAT ROOF OF HOUSE, WITH TOP OF STAIRCASE.

Owing to the saltpetre in the clay with which the bricks are made, the houses generally look rather scabby, especially near the ground; but when the walls are newly finished and the Venetians have received a fresh coat of green paint, a Calcutta house looks very pretty. Of all the places I have seen since my return to Europe, Jersey reminds me most of India.

These houses vary little in style. As was the custom in England a generation back, houses are

built very much like each other. The style is mostly Doric, and when the building is three stories high, with a broad verandah on two or three sides, each supported by massive pillars, there is something palatial in their appearance. For an illumination I know no city that is better fitted for an effective display. All the houses have flat roofs, on which it is most pleasant to sit or walk in the early morning or after the sun has set. Formerly the grounds of each house were surrounded by a high wall, but the fashion—and a good one it is—has set in in favour of cast iron railings instead. As the gardens are tastelessly laid out, these, together with the clean white walls of the house and the green Venetians, form a very attractive picture. Many of our manufacturing towns in England certainly look ugly and uninteresting to one who has spent many years in a place like Calcutta.

The plan of these houses is a very simple one, there is not much architectural ingenuity or variety displayed in them. The typical Calcutta house has a hall in the centre, with two rooms on either side, each having its bath room, the hall on the ground floor serving for dining room, and that on the first floor for drawing room. There are no underground rooms or cellars, as in the rainy season the water is only about three or four feet from the surface. When people cannot afford to rent a whole house—and rents in Calcutta are exceedingly high—they take a flat, so that in many large houses there are two or even three families living. I have known £100 a year to be paid for a couple of rooms on the third or uppermost flat of a house in the heart of the city.

Along the bank of the Hugli is the Strand—the drive or Rotten Row of Calcutta, at one end of which are the Eden Gardens, a most beautifully laid-out spot, where a military band discourses sweet music as the sun goes down. There, for about half an hour, all Calcutta assembles. Many leave their carriages for a promenade; whilst others remain seated and their friends come to chat with them there. It is most interesting to walk through the gardens at this hour, as there would hardly be found in any part of the world a more diversified crowd. It is a cosmopolitan gathering—Europe and Asia, Africa and America, are represented; whilst the ubiquitous Jew is also present in good numbers. I certainly have never seen in any place a more interesting gathering of the various branches of the human family than is to be met with evening after evening in these gardens. The whole place is brilliantly illuminated with gas and the electric light.

On one or two evenings in the week there is a slight diversion from the gardens by the river. Calcutta can boast of a Zoo, beautifully laid out, and well stocked with animals, birds, and reptiles. This was the result of the immense energy and artistic taste of Sir R. Temple. In about a couple of years, a dirty, ugly village and a piece of waste land were transformed into a beautiful garden with its lakes and hills, and houses for specimens of the animal world from distant countries as well as from all parts of India. It is a marvel of ingenuity and perseverance, and it would be difficult to name any place where one could spend a pleasanter hour than in the Zoo in Calcutta. The birds and animals usually

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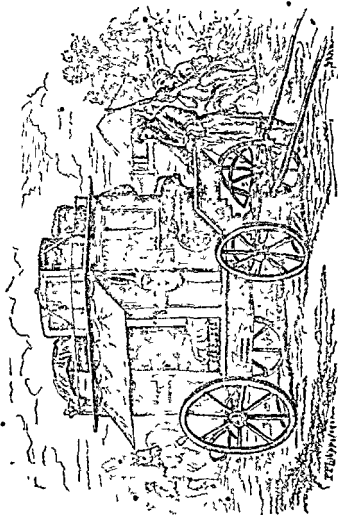
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found at such places in Europe, where they need to be carefully guarded against the cold, are at home in a climate such as that of India, and are as happy as caged animals can possibly be. As a band plays in the gardens on certain evenings, a good number of Calcutta people find their way there.

Between the European part of the city and the river, in front of the fort, is the Maidān, a plain about a mile and a quarter across. This forms the parade ground for the troops; an exercise ground for a goodly number of Europeans and natives who are wise enough to get up early in the morning for a ride, drive, or walk; a place where football, cricket, polo, and lawn tennis are played in the evening; and often, too, it is the camping ground for native or European troops for whom the fort cannot provide sufficient accommodation. Round this plain rise some of the best European residences, and the view across it to the river when the rains have refreshed the earth, the tall masts of the ships forming a background, is one not soon to be forgotten.

On the Strand road at drive-time may be seen almost every kind of vehicle from the four-in-hand coach to the little pony carriage. Barouches, broughams, landaus, phaetons, roll along; also the buggy, or hooded gig, the dog-cart, and mail-phaeton. The typical local conveyance is a palki gharry; *i.e.*, a square box on wheels. There are several modifications of this ugly conveyance; but though very comfortable and serviceable on sunny days or in the rainy season, they are not at all comfortable in the evening or morning, when the object of the drive is simply to get a little fresh air. Numbers of ladies

and gentlemen ride; so the Strand presents quite a gay scene. Walking there, one does not feel that India is a land of barbarism.

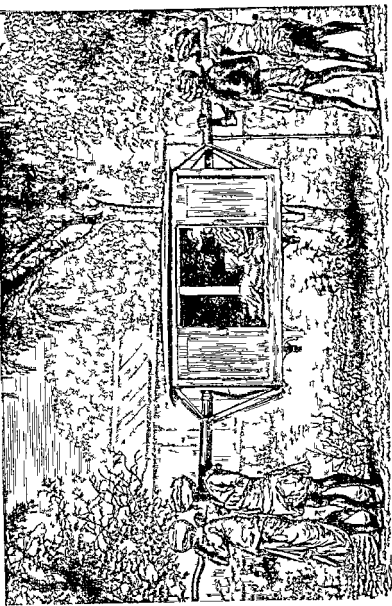


AN INDIAN TRAVELLING CARRIAGE.

Whilst these grand equipages are driving along,

some earnest seekers after health try to keep their livers in order by a walk, whilst others are carried along in the palanquin, better known in Calcutta as the *palki*. This is certainly *one* of the most uncomfortable modes of conveyance—to lie in a semi-recumbent posture, having no comfortable resting place for the head. The *palki* bearers are quite an institution in the city. They stand at the corner of every street, and seem to regard it as a personal injury to themselves that a European should walk through the streets. As there are four men to each *palki* and each is anxious for a fare, it is most difficult to get along without being irritated by the cry, "*Palki, saheb! Palki, saheb!*" These men with their conveyance are far more trying to one's patience than the news boys in a London street. A story is told of a sailor who, wishing to see as much as possible of the city, could not be persuaded to ride inside a *palki* but mounting on the top, made the men carry him in this way—to them as sensible a procedure as it would be for a man to sit on the top of a cab rather than inside. To these vehicles must be added the *jinriksha* or man carriage of Japan, a sort of buggy drawn by a man, and also the English bicycle and tricycle.

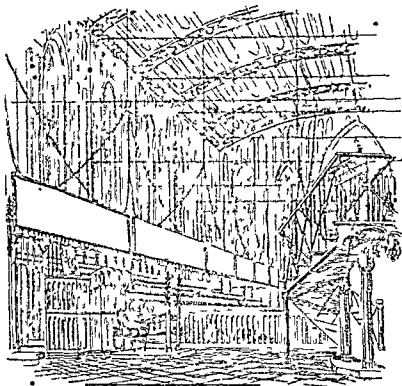
A word or two about the churches. Although so far from Europe there seems to be ample provision for various spiritual tastes. First comes the cathedral, a pretty but by no means imposing structure, for which India is indebted to Bishop Wilson. This is—the most fashionable congregation in the city. A capital organ, a well trained choir, and an ornate service render it most attractive. In addition to this



there are several Churches of England, to all of which, excepting one supplied by the missionaries of the Church Missionary Society, Government chaplains are appointed. Then there is one of the Established and one of the Free Church of Scotland; an Episcopal Methodist Church of America, and a Wesleyan Methodist; two Baptist and two Congregational churches. There are also three societies of Plymouth Brethren, one free, one very close, and one composed of two members only, who separated from the stricter party because they felt that their members ought not to preach the gospel to the heathen. Their position is this: if God wishes the heathen to be converted, He will accomplish this work without human aid. There are also six Roman Catholic churches. None of the churches are remarkable for their beauty or grandeur. In most of them arm-chairs take the place of pews; and for nine months in the year punkahs sway to and fro over the heads of the congregation to keep them cool in body, and so conduce to calmness of spirit during the service. The buildings of the Brahmos, or Hindus who have given up idol-worship and caste, should also be added to the places of worship, as in external appearance and internal arrangements they differ but little from them.

In walking about the city, one cannot fail to be struck with the number of tanks; where in an English town the centre of a square is adorned with a flower-garden or shrubbery, in Calcutta we have a sheet of water called a tank, often with plants growing round the edges. Formerly these tanks were necessary as water supplies for the district. But now

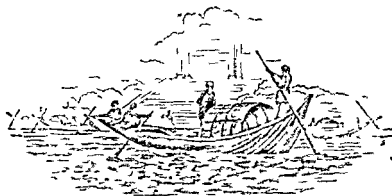
there is a good water-works system, they remain to beautify, and possibly in some cases tend to preserve the health of the city. • Some of the people, however, still prefer to take their water from the tanks rather than from the pipes. • In the choice of water as in



INTERIOR OF CATHEDRAL, CALCUTTA, SHOWING THE PUNEAHS

other matters, men differ in their ideas. I have seen many who prefer to drink the muddy and unfiltered water from a tank rather than the pure water from the pipe: they say the one is sweet, the other tasteless!

A word or two must be said about the river, with its splendid fleet of ships of all nations. At Calcutta it is fully a quarter of a mile wide, and is spanned by a pontoon bridge. Formerly, passengers were dependent upon a ferry steamer, or had to cross in some of the small boats, or dinghies as they are called; but the bridge being strong and wide, it is easy to drive across. As, however, the docks are above the bridge, and as some of the large ships occasionally anchor above it, twice a week this heavy structure is



A DINGHY.

opened, and a passage made by which they can go up or down. Craft of all kinds are to be seen. Sometimes there is a man-of-war in the harbour; the splendid fleets of the Peninsular and Oriental Co., the British India, and the City Line are always represented. There are also some of the largest sailing ships afloat, and some of the Chittagong ships—strong ships whose boards are tied together, without a single nail. There are passenger boats of every description, the dinghy being perhaps the

one that is peculiar to North India. It is surprising in going from port to port to see the different shape and style of boat that is in use, and yet it would be hard to improve upon what we see. These dinghies are heavy, cumbersome looking craft but they seem to serve the purpose better than our own English boats would do.

As there is a large number of sailors always in port, formerly there was an immense amount of drunkenness amongst them. Those who have never made a long voyage cannot understand the position of a man when he is once more on *terra firma*. The lengthened imprisonment over for a time, the men are ready for any amusement that offers, and as until a few years ago the only places on shore for Jack were the grog shops, it was no wonder that he found his way there, and became intoxicated. But this has now to a large extent passed away. A splendid Sailors' Home has been built, where concerts are given by the philanthropic friends of the sailor. On the floating Bethel of the Church of England Seamen's Mission a similar entertainment is provided. The Episcopal Methodists of America have opened two coffee rooms in most convenient situations for the men. There religious services are provided, and reading rooms with games and accommodation for writing, whilst for apprentices a tea meeting and service is held at the Y M C A rooms. I have heard many officers of ships declare that at no port in the world are the sailors better cared for than in Calcutta. And many are the stories told of young and old finding their way to God at the services held for them in this far off city.

The smallest copper coin in circulation is the pice, the value of which is $\frac{1}{4}$ of 1½d. ; this is worth eighty cowries, and with these shells a good deal of business is transacted. In some towns of England farthings are not taken; how would the tradespeople like to have to do with shells of which about fifty go to the farthing?

The next thing one notices, is the way in which the people carry on their work in the open shops, where their goods are exposed for sale. If you want to purchase a stationery box, you go into a shop with its front wide open, and see the boxes in all stages of progress; or a picture of an idol, in like manner you see the artists at work with their brushes. Blacksmiths, carpenters, brass-workers, jewellers, &c., all work in sight of the world, and do not appear to be at all ashamed of being seen, or hindered by the passers-by. I have heard people speak of the Hindus as lazy; but certainly we see nothing of this as we walk through the streets. All appear to be hard at work. The purely native shops—i.e., those where goods that are needed only by the natives can be obtained—are open, and work begins early in the morning, continuing until about eleven o'clock. They are then closed, and the work-people go away for their bath and morning meal. About two o'clock they re-open, and remain open until nine or ten at night. A walk through the streets is most interesting. Nothing is more surprising than to see the beautiful results in chasing in brass-work, or the carvings in ivory, and then to examine the clumsy tools with which this is done. The use that is made of the toes, too, is astonishing.

the mansions of the best Hindu families. Many of these are very large, as they have to accommodate two hundred or more people. The Hindu idea of a family is very different from the English. When a man marries in England, he thinks it his duty to provide a house and establishment of his own, quite distinct from his father's and brothers'; but the Hindu boy-bridegroom takes his new wife to his father's house, where a bedroom is given to him. In some of these mansions there are four generations of people living together; not only the immediate descendants—i.e. the sons, grandsons, and great-grandsons of the karta or head of the family; but his brothers and their descendants too. Nor do they only live together; all the money the various members earn is put into a common fund, over the expenditure of which the karta rules.

In these large houses, which are generally built in the Classic style of architecture, having verandahs supported by massive Corinthian pillars, there are the outer and inner apartments quite distinct from each other; the outer being for the gentlemen and their visitors, the inner for the ladies. During the day, except at meal times, the gentlemen remain in their part of the house, as it is considered contrary to good etiquette for a man to be seen speaking to his wife by day. I have read of a bishop in the early Church being gravely censured for kissing his wife in the presence of his children; but Hindu custom goes beyond that—husband and wife must not speak to each other in the presence of the family. In the open courtyard of these houses the religious festivals are held.

The houses of the poor people are of a very different style. These are built of mud or matting, with tiled or thatched roofs, and have no glass windows—simply a little lattice-work to admit light and air, many of them being even destitute of this, and are quite dark when the doors are closed. They, too, have their verandah, and a family—according to our notions of a family, consisting of husband, wife and children—occupies a separate house.

The place of interest to all new-comers in Calcutta,



A BENGALI HUT.

is China Bazaar. This is a narrow street in which shops of all kinds have been opened by natives, almost exclusively for the supply of goods to Europeans. Bengalis and other natives, of course, are to be found amongst the customers; but it is mostly Europeans that frequent it. These shops are supplied with all kinds of European goods, and also the productions of distant parts of India, China, &c. Walking along about ten a.m., you notice each shop is carefully locked with two, three, or even four large padlocks. In a little time, a respectably

dressed Bengali comes to the shop, but he has the key of *one* lock only; he must wait until his partners' arrival; and when all are present, the locks are removed and the door opened. This mutual distrust is very common amongst the people. When the shops are opened, the business of the day commences, and a lively scene it is. A stranger is pestered as he walks along the street, or his carriage is stopped without his orders by the touts, who declare that you are certain to get whatever you may require at *his* shop; and further, that at his shop you will have honest men to deal with, whilst at all his rivals there are only liars and rogues. At times, the dispute between the rival touts gets loud and angry in *words*; you need never fear anything beyond this, though the foulest abuse will be launched on the female relatives of the quarrellers. In these shops, ladies find tailors (men) at work trimming hats and bonnets, with a fashion-plate of the *Queen*, or *Myra's Journal* before them; men also making jackets, dresses, &c., from similar designs. The touts declare, "In my shop you everything get;" and though this is a somewhat exaggerated statement, it is true that either at his shop or his neighbours' in China Bazaar you will meet with almost everything that you can require, and often at prices but little above those asked in small English towns. Formerly, these dealers were supplied by the English merchants; now the manufacturers of England send their travellers to India, and their goods are sent direct to the native shop-keepers. When one is not in a hurry, there is often an immense amount of fun to be had in a walk

in England we have glass houses with a heating apparatus in which tropical plants are reared, in the Calcutta gardens we have *cool* houses; the object being to obtain light without the bright sunbeams. These houses have an iron framework, with sides and roof of wire netting. On this, thin layers of grass are spread, by which means the plants are protected from the intense heat though they have a sufficiency of light. The crotons at Kew Gardens look poor compared with those in Calcutta. The



A BANYAN TREE, CALCUTTA

attraction of the gardens, however, are the two banyan trees, one of which is said to be large enough to shade ten thousand men. The new branches of this tree run down hollow bamboos until they touch the ground, where they take root, and become supporters and feeders of the older parts of the tree. There seems to be no reason why, in time, one of these trees should not grow until its branches spread for miles. In the cold season, picnic parties are common in Calcutta; and to those who have often had their arrangements upset by the rain in

England, it comes as a pleasant surprise that they can make their arrangements for a party weeks or months beforehand with the certainty of having suitable weather.

There is one drawback to life even in this city, viz., the fearful cyclones that occasionally sweep across it. In 1864 there was a terrible storm, and as before its force was spent the wind blew directly up the river, it caused a wave about twenty feet high to rise, which tore away most of the ships from their moorings, and lifted several some distance inland. The waters swept over Sangar Island near the mouth of the river, and it was estimated that about twenty thousand people were drowned by it. - In 1867 a second came, the force of which I felt. The strong walls of the house in which I was living swayed to and fro, the doors and windows of one side being carried away. I saw a piece of corrugated iron that was carried from the theatre with such force, that as it struck against the corner of a building near it was bent like a sheet of paper. Fortunately these do not visit the city very frequently; or rather, the centre does not often pass over it. There is scarcely a year without the edge of one or more of these fearful storms touching the city; and when the storm-signals proclaim the fact that a cyclone is expected, every one is busy in tying the doors and windows and looking to the fastenings of their houses, so that in case it should come in force they may be safe from its violence. To experience one of these dreadful storms is quite sufficient for a lifetime.

CHAPTER II.

CALCUTTA, THE OXFORD OF INDIA.

CALCUTTA has not inaptly been called the Oxford of India. Having its university and numerous affiliated colleges, it attracts a large number of students from all parts of the province. Some of these belong to the richer families, but the majority of them are poor; nothing is nobler than the sacrifice which many poor Hindus make in order that their sons may obtain a good education. Speaking generally, a man who knows English will rise to a better position and obtain a much higher salary than one who knows Bengali or Hindusthāni only; hence many regard it as a good investment of their money to educate their sons, for it would be most disgraceful were a son who rises in life to retain his income for himself. The picture in *Punch* of a man who, being asked by a lord if his father was present at his table, as he must be proud to see how his son had succeeded, replied, "No, my lord, we must draw the line somewhere!" so far as I know, could never have been given of Hindus. According to a proverbial expression, a man should divide his income into four parts: one goes to the payment of debts, i.e. the support

of parents; one for current expenses; one for religious purposes; and one is put into the bank, *i.e.* spent in the education of the sons. The Hindu system leads a man to give up his income, whether great or small, to his family; and it often happens that, if a man cannot afford more, he will educate *one* of his sons, the other members of the family, as well



A REVEALS DOCTOR.

as the father, benefiting from the earnings of the educated one.

The University of Calcutta, like that of London, is simply an examining body. It has no teaching staff, but selects the books that are to be read and appoints its examiners. But, by the mere selection of books, it exerts an immense influence upon the thousands

of students who attend the colleges. The study of Milton, Shakspeare &c, has impelled many, who otherwise would probably have never set it to carefully read parts of the Bible in order to understand the teachings of these authors. As the University does not teach a certificate must be obtained by candidates for degrees from one of the colleges affiliated with it that they have attended classes. At 1 before a candidate is sent up for the university examination he must submit to a test examination at his college, so that those only who have a reasonable prospect of passing are allowed to sit for examination. Nearly four thousand students are entered yearly for the matriculation examination at the university, of whom about 15 per cent pass. After two years comes the First B A examination and after a further course of two years the final B A.

Great though the desire in England may be to obtain a degree it is far exceeded in India. A successful candidate has the prospect—now a days a faint one in most cases, it is true—of obtaining a situation in a Government office. This is the one thing that is chiefly desired. But though in many official appointments are obtained by competitive examinations it is necessary before competing to pass either the Entrance 1st or 2nd B A standard. The same is true of the legal and medical professions. A law or medical student must pass the 1st B A examination before he can enter the branches. This forces an immense number of men to work very hard ere they present themselves to the examiners. There is certain degree of value attached to the fact that man has been allowed to enter the examination

although he has failed to pass. It is no uncommon thing to hear a man spoken of as a "failed F.A." or "failed B.A.," i.e. one who has been examined for the First Arts or B.A. It shows that he must have matriculated and also have attended the higher classes for two years, and also have passed the test examination of his college. In no country are men more proud of their degrees or more anxious to obtain them than in India. *All this has been brought about within the last generation. Educated men, thirty years ago, had no difficulty in obtaining good situations under Government; but now the market is overstocked, and as many who, at great expense have reached what was formerly the open door to honour and a good income, find themselves crowded out they shriek loudly against the Government as though it had acted unfairly towards them. A great deal of the seditious language that finds its way into the native newspapers is the disappointed cry of those who had hoped, on obtaining their degree, to find a straight path to position and wealth. These men have yet to learn that labour is not degrading to an educated man.

The Bengalis are very clever, and avail themselves of any help to get successfully through an examination. For many years the names of examiners were published a year in advance. If they happened to be professors of a Calcutta college, their classes would be crowded with earnest students; if they had published any work, it was eagerly purchased and carefully studied. The peculiarities of their minds were fully noted, and their favourite branches of the subject well attended to. So much was this the case, that of

late years it has been the object of the University to keep secret the names of the gentlemen who were to examine, in order that this evil might be avoided.

As there are no residential colleges, the students reside where they like. Many live at home, others in lodgings, whilst for some hostels, as they are called, are opened, i.e. houses in which students only reside, and generally those of one caste only, so that they can have their food prepared in strict accord with their religious scruples.

Although there are several centres where the examinations are held, a very large number come to the University building in Calcutta. Sometimes it happens that cholera breaks out amongst the candidates, and in a few hours the hopes of many of the parents are destroyed. Instead of the answers coming into the examiners' hands is a slip with the number of the candidate and one word only, "dead," written upon it. Could those slips speak, what a sad tale they would tell of parents' sacrifice for their children, and of their sadness of heart as they heard of the loss of their sons when it was expected that some return for their years of sacrifice might be made!

So anxious are the students to pass, that it is not at all uncommon for them to appeal to the examiner to give them "passing marks," whether they deserve them or not. As a rule they occupy the whole time allotted for writing, and if unable to answer the questions set, they write something—whether it has anything to do with the questions does not matter. One pleads an attack of fever as a reason for giving in a poor paper, another mentions that he is poor, and if he fail this year all hope of securing his

degree is gone. The following authentic copy of a letter will show the style of candidates' appeals : *

"To the Humane Examiner.

"Sir,—Knowing that I shall be plucked in this branch, I am writing an application to show your favor to me. I am a poor man, son of a poor family. But you may say that as I have not worked any single sum how can I show favor towards you. But the reasons. I have passed in the three other days ; and I know not why I cannot work these sums ; perhaps God is on my opposite side, or my fortune is bad. If you give me ten marks then that will be sufficient for me. If you do not show me this favor I shall lose my whole year. You see distribute pice (money) to poor which is of great labor ; but this is of very petty labor, so give me the above-mentioned marks.

"From your most obedient servant."

It will be borne in mind that the examinations of the University are conducted in English. This makes the preparation difficult for boys whose mother-tongue is Bengali, and who scarcely know a word of English until they attend school when they are about eight or nine years of age ; but so earnestly do many of them work that, although in conversation they make most numerous and glaring errors, their study of English as a language is far more profound than that of most English-speaking boys. I once examined an English school in Calcutta, in which a few native,

* "Indo English," p. 71.

mostly Christian, boys were admitted. My paper was on English grammar and composition. I was surprised to find that out of twenty boys, the first, third, fourth, and fifth places were taken by Bengalis. And it often happens in the office examinations, Bengali boys obtain a higher position than English, although in conversation and in the general use of the language they are far behind them.

Calcutta has splendid educational advantages; there are the Government colleges, and the Government aided.

In the Government colleges, all expenses beyond the fees received are paid directly by the Government. For these a splendid staff of professors, graduates of British universities, are provided. As the fees are higher in these than in the aided colleges, the students as a rule come from the more wealthy families; and as many of these students have private tutors to assist them, they generally secure a higher position in the lists. The cost, however, to Government for each student is exceedingly high; and when we remember that most of these students are the sons of rich men, whilst the sum spent by Government on the education of the masses is exceedingly small, a sense of injustice is produced. It is an illustration, though in a sense different from that intended, that "unto him that hath shall be given." These students could well afford to pay much higher fees, and lessen to that extent the cost to the Government; whilst the sum thus liberated might well be spent on the education of the masses.

The Sanskrit College is attended by the sons of the gentry and those of high caste. A few years ago,

when one of the students became a Christian, several of the parents of the other students tried to induce the principal to expel him, who, as they thought, had disgraced his name and family by being baptized. The principal refusing to accede to this cruel request, a petition was presented to the Lieut.-Governor of the province asking him to interfere in the matter. This gentleman very wisely referred the case to a committee of learned men, who, after considerable discussion, declared that they had searched the Hindu scriptures in vain for any prohibition of baptism, and consequently they could adduce no reason why the young man should leave the college. Seeing that the rite of baptism was unknown in India when the old religious books of the Hindus were written, it is not to be wondered at that this decision should have been made. Would that this pronouncement of the committee were generally accepted by the Hindus; that their scriptures do not forbid a man openly declaring himself a Christian—then the great difficulty that the caste system throws in the way of converts would be removed.

After the Government institutions must be mentioned those that receive Government grants. These colleges are worked by the missionaries, or by committees of the natives. A grant-in-aid is given to a college according to the number of its students and the cost of its maintenance. Formerly, similar grants were made to schools; but education has now become so popular in the city that no grants are necessary for them. In the suburbs, however, schools educating up to the entrance standard continue to receive grants in proportion to their expenditure.

There are three Mission colleges in Calcutta, and several others in the province of Bengal. These belong to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, the Free Church of Scotland, and the London Missionary Society. In these Institutions over three thousand boys and young men are regularly taught, as they contain schools for the juniors and college classes for the undergraduates. Nearly all the pupils are Hindus. There are a few Christians and Mahomedans, but the Mahomedans, as a rule, keep aloof from the Government and mission schools, and attend their own colleges, where they are taught the Arabic language and the Mahomedan religion.

In addition to the above are colleges and schools supported by the Brahmos and Hindus. These are about equal in value as educational agencies to the mission schools. Many Hindu parents send their sons to them in preference to the Government institutions because their fees are lower, and because morality and religion are taught. Most Hindus believe firmly that education should be religious.

For the European boys there are three institutions, St. Xavier's College, La Martiniere, and the Doveton Collegé. St. Xavier's is well worked by Jesuit professors, and attracts not only Roman Catholics, but also a goodly number of Protestants and Hindus; La Martiniere is almost exclusively for boarders, and is a capital institution for children whose fathers are dead. It has proved an immense boon to many in India. The Doveton College is an endowed school for European and East Indian boys, that does a good work.

For the lower classes there are schools of three grades, in which scholarships may be obtained to enable poorer boys to continue their studies in the colleges; and then, as the lowest of all, come the *pāṭshalas*, i.e. schools in which the simplest elementary training is given. These were originally the schools of India, but they have been quite cast into the shade by the English schools that have so largely superseded them. There is no School Board, but an Educational Department, with its Director of public instruction and inspectors; and it is pleasing to note that the spread of education has been so rapid, that at the present time there is scarcely a village that either has not a school of some sort in its midst, or within easy reach of its people. Still, in the improvement of the village schools very much remains to be done, and also in inducing some parents to allow their children to continue at school long enough to obtain sufficient training to make it of use to them. The cruelty of the masters of the old *patshalas* was a disgrace to the community; but this is a thing of the past. The birch and cane were mild correctors of youth compared to those once common in India.

From the general education of the people we pass on to notice the provision for training in medicine and surgery. This was the need of India. Before the opening of the Medical College, the study and practice of medicine was a very poor affair. Anatomy was out of the question, because by the Hindus it was considered as ceremonially defiling to touch a dead body. The *lobinajes*, as the ordinary practitioners are called, were a most

ignorant set of men. They are still to be seen wandering about with their medicines, ringing a bell to call the attention of the people, and crying their wares as an itinerant cough-lozenge man does in an English market. The peripatetic doctor is a common sight still in the villages, though he is not so frequently seen in the cities. The treatment for diseases of the spleen and liver was certainly heroic. You may see numbers of people with scars as large as a half-crown, where a heated iron has been applied; whilst inoculation for small-pox was most commonly resorted to. There were no schools of medicine: any one who wished could practise, their learning being picked up in a most promiscuous manner. For women there was practically no treatment, as the *kobirāj* would not be admitted into the women's apartments. In India, Nature, the great healer of disease, has been allowed to have pretty much her own way; and though in many cases she has done well, a little more science and a little more care would have saved the lives of many, and lessened the sufferings of more.

But now this is all changed. There is a splendid medical school at the Medical College, with its large hospital for gaining practical knowledge. At this school the instruction is given in English, and a large number of the students when they have passed their final examinations are employed by the Government to take charge of country districts, in which dispensaries are opened. In order to obtain the degree of M.D., and also admission into the higher grades of the service, it is necessary for the students to come to Great Britain; hence, at the English and Scotch

schools of medicine, many of the natives of India are to be found. As, however, the supply of these well-qualified men is not sufficient, or rather as the expense of supporting them for village work is too great, a subordinate class in which instruction is given in the vernacular languages, has been opened, and hundreds of men are under instruction which will qualify them for ordinary practice. Within a few miles of nearly every village, a medical man with a supply of drugs is to be found. This is a great boon, as I can testify. I well remember once being taken seriously ill at a village only thirty miles from Calcutta, where I had to wait about four hours before I could obtain even a little mustard. At the stations where Europeans reside there is always a qualified surgeon, who, in addition to his hospital and dispensary work, has to attend to them. The gentlemen in Government service have a right to his services gratuitously, as his salary is paid by the Government, but when the Government official is married, it is an unwritten law that he gives three days salary a year to the medical officer for his attendance on his family.

Most astonishing is the progress of education amongst the girls and women. Fifty years ago it was difficult to find a respectable woman who could read. Educated men now prefer educated to ignorant wives, and the standard of female education has gradually risen until the Calcutta University can boast of having had the honour of conferring degrees upon some of the native women of India.



AN ENGLISH DINNER TO LE DE INDI

CHAPTER III

THE PEOPLE—RUSSOFS IN I DIA

is not gold;" that even England is not all that in their absence they had imagined it to be, and sometimes they are inclined to sigh for some of the things that they had enjoyed in India. As a result of this dissatisfaction, life becomes a burden, and it is no wonder if they find many things to annoy them.

Others again, and generally those who enter upon Indian life young, find it to be different indeed in many respects from English, but affording many pleasures that fully compensate for those they have left behind. When the balance is struck, they declare that, on the whole, life is fully as pleasant under the bright skies of India as under the leaden clouds of England; and many who after living a lifetime in India settle down at home, often look back with longing hearts to the land they have left for ever. It is impossible for English people who have never lived in India to enter into the pleasure with which old Indians talk over familiar scenes and congenial pursuits in the sunny East. I shall try to give a fair description of this life, though I do not wish to disguise the fact that I can honestly say, "India, with all thy faults, I love thee still," because, during nearly twenty years there, I had as bright and happy a life as falls to the lot of most men.

The secret of a happy life, whether in England or India, is good health and congenial work. Plenty of work and strength to do it, means happiness in almost any part of the world. That there are many little annoyances in a tropical climate, none can deny; but if the mind is fully occupied with other things, they do not trouble us much. One has only to read the lives of such men as Lord Lawrence, and see them sitting,

minus coat and waistcoat, hard at work from morn till night, and we find that under such circumstances the heat that others in other circumstances found most trying was scarcely noticed. I can remember how many a time, when busily engaged, I scarcely noticed that the perspiration was dropping from my chin, and the blotting-pad under my hand was soaking wet, until my attention was called to the fact that it was hot. I can honestly say this, that however hot the temperature might be, I was always able to think; but in England during days of intense cold my brain seemed frozen, and I could do little but shiver and grumble.

As a rule, English gentlemen in India work hard. In the early morning, say about half-past five, they get up, and, after a cup of tea and toast, and fruit, take exercise either on horseback, foot, or cycle. On their return the newspaper comes not wet from the printers, but has dried *en route*; and if he be studious, there is time for an hour's reading. Calcutta boasts of three English daily papers, besides others in English edited by natives. Many in merchants' and some in Government offices bring home work that requires careful attention, and devote an hour or two to this before breakfast. At half-past eight or nine o'clock comes breakfast; but before this is the luxury, and also the necessity, of India—the bath. After breakfast there is office work until five or six o'clock, with a short break of about half an hour for tiffin or lunch. On return from office people dine about seven, after which amusement of some kind is sought in the form of reading, cards, billiards, &c. Often, of course, parties are attended and given. There

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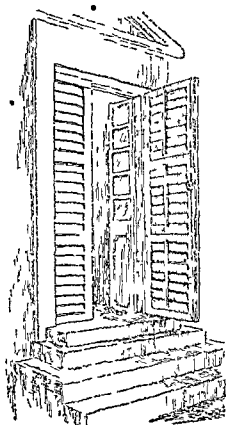
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are far more dinner parties in India than amongst the same classes in England. Except during the cold season there are few public amusements, hence music is more cultivated in the home, and those who have any special talent are well exercised in amateur concerts arranged either for the benefit of the professors of music, or for some local charities. As a rule, English people do not sit up late in India and with few exceptions they work harder than do many in similar positions at home. I question if any harder worked class of men could be found than the members of the Indian civil service. Many who have no love for Sunday work declare that it is impossible for them to attend to their routine duties and write the voluminous reports required of them unless they avail themselves of the closing of their offices on Sundays.

But with the English ladies life certainly presents a different aspect. Whilst husband and sons are at office the days must appear terribly long to those at home, because during half the year at least, in the belief that by this means the heat is lessened, the light is almost excluded. A stranger arriving in India in the hot season is greatly astonished at the general paleness of the ladies. It is not that they are all ill, but living in semi darkness for months together, they look washed out, just as plants that are kept in darkness. The Indian houses are constructed on quite an opposite plan from that of our English homes. Here, we want snugness and warmth in India coolness and air so that whilst the windows in English houses are made with the intention of being occasionally opened, in India they are made

with the intention of being occasionally closed. The glass sashes are fitted with hinges, and closed when it rains, or during the hot part of the day to exclude the heated air. Outside of these are the thick



DOOR OF HOUSE, SHOWING SASHES AND VENETIANS.

Venetians; made of three quarter inch wood, with flaps about three inches wide. These are arranged so that they can be closed, or left half open. In the hot season about 9 a m. these Venetians and the glass sashes are closed, so that only a little light can enter

good, it is necessary that they should be sent to a more congenial clime.

As an illustration of the necessity of sending children home may be mentioned the fact that it is almost impossible to make them self-helpful and self-reliant in India. Servants are numerous, and very submissive. I have often been amused, and at the same time pained, to see boys walking to school with a servant in attendance to carry their books. Boys having servants within call can with the greatest difficulty be taught to do anything for themselves. On moral grounds, the necessity for sending the children away is greater still. Boys cannot be trained to become truthful and fearless in the cowardly and untruthful atmosphere of India. If a child does wrong, the servants will deliberately lie in the very presence of the child, and thus show that lying saves from punishment. No amount of good instruction can counteract this.

There are few husbands who have not passed through the painful experience of putting wife and children on board a steamer, and then going back to an empty house that had before resounded with children's voices. This is *the one* unutterably painful experience of life in the East. At some time or other the hour of decision comes to most married people; who must make the sacrifice, husband or children? Must the wife go and remain at home with the children whilst the husband lives alone; or must the children be left in England without a home for years. Bitter has been the experience of children thus left behind. I have heard of some, for whose education and comfort large fees have been paid,

Being half starved, badly taught, and made little better than domestic drudges by those who ought honestly to have treated them well: and all this time the children were compelled to write to their parents elaborately false statements speaking of the kindness they received, and of the comforts they enjoyed. When children thus treated in their turn become parents, and their children are too old to remain in India, they determine that, whatever happens, their children shall never suffer in this manner. To prevent this the mother remains in England for years, whilst the father toils on in loneliness, with the satisfaction that he is doing the best he can for his children. Many English families in India have thus been broken up for many years together.

Those who have never been called to part with their children cannot at all realize the position of parents in India. After a letter has come by the mail, telling of the dangerous illness of a beloved child, a long week must elapse before any further tidings can be received: and the parents know that were they to start off home at once, long before they could reach their loved one their help would come too late. Before the telegraphic communication was made, this was far worse than it is at present. But even with the telegraph the trial is very hard to bear; the utter helplessness one feels to do anything for those dearer than life itself cannot be described.

A sad chapter might be written on the romance of Anglo-Indian life: a chapter, though chiefly in a tragic vein, would not be without its comedy too. As illustrations of the tragic side of life, the following

may be given; and a goodly number of similar stories might easily be told. A wife and family start from England to rejoin the husband and father. They have been separated for years; the one bright star has been the hope of seeing and being welcomed back by him who was the constant topic of thought and conversation on the voyage. The imagination had painted the happy meeting, the joy of talking together of events that had happened during the separation. The ship drops anchor, and when the voyagers are eagerly looking for the smiling face of the one so dear, a friend comes with the sad story that he is dead. Or, again, a husband in the solitude of his Indian home, instead of the welcome weekly letter from his wife, sees a letter in a stranger's writing. As he tremblingly opens it, he finds that his wife has gone, and that the happy meeting he had hoped for will never be in this world. And parents hearts' are almost broken as they receive the news that the child from whom they have been parted for years, and whom they were hoping to see soon as bright sunshine in their home, has been taken from them. When we are with our dear ones and see their gradual decline, and with sympathizing heart and loving hand have done all we could to alleviate their sufferings, death is painful; but the suddenness of the blow as it falls upon the bereaved in a distant country, makes it very heavy to bear. Occasionally, it happens even now, when passengers travel quickly in steamers—but in the days when they came round the Cape it was a more frequent occurrence—that young men on going down to meet their intended brides have found that, on the voyage, their heart's

affection had been transferred to a fellow-passenger, and the faithful one has had to return to his friends to receive condolences on his loss instead of congratulation on his bliss. Sometimes it happens that a gentleman, not seeing any one in India he cared to marry, and not being in a position to go home to seek a bride, has made love by letter to a friend of a friend, and when the lady arrived he has needed an introduction to her who in a day or two would become his bride. But these experiences have become rare since the journey has been reduced from one hundred and twenty to thirty days.

Another feature of Anglo-Indian life is the great hospitality that is shown to strangers. Certainly in this matter things are managed better there than here. When a gentleman or lady arrives in India, it is not the custom for them to wait until the residents happen to hear of their arrival, but bringing a letter of introduction, or perhaps knowing some one in the place, they soon find friends to welcome them. They first inquire on whom they should call.* Within a week the visit is returned, and probably within a month they will be invited to dine at the houses of a good number of those on whom they have called. In this manner they soon feel at home though living in a new country. It is a custom of the country coming down from the good old times when people kept almost open house, for an extra plate and knife and fork to be always placed on the dinner-table. The servants do it without an order, so that if a guest come in there is a chair ready for him. In country stations where there are no hotels, it is not uncommon for a traveller to be commended to the

care of a resident through a mutual friend, though host and guest have never met; nor is it unusual for a perfect stranger to write to ask for entertainment for a day or two. Accustomed as we are to the hotel system of Europe, it is a pleasant surprise to meet with the hospitality that is so common in India; and old Indians returning to England, contrast the friendliness of India with the coldness of England in this matter.

Another peculiarity of Anglo-Indian life is the freedom of intercourse between Europeans. In England I have been astonished to see gentlemen, who have been associated in politics and Christian work for years address each other as "Mr." Smith and "Mr." Brown; and in speaking, say "Sir" to each other, as though they were new acquaintances. But this is very rare in India. "Sir" is seldom used, and gentlemen within a few minutes of being introduced to each other drop the "Mr.," and address each other by their surnames. Of course all Englishmen are not regarded as equals. There is a line separating them into two great classes—those in society and those outside; i.e. those who have the privilege of appearing at the *levée* of the Governor-General, and those who have not this privilege. Within this sacred enclosure all are theoretically equal—or at any rate they associate in many things on equal terms; but between those within and those without this charmed circle there is not much sympathy. In certain places in England there is a rigid line separating society from the rest; but I have never heard in England of exclusiveness such as prevails in Anglo-Indian society. Clerks in mer-

chants' offices may appear at Government House, but the heads of the large tradesmen's houses are excluded, though some of the latter are quite as well educated, and as gentlemanly in their character and life, as some of the former. In the small stations where there are from ten to twenty Government officials, in social gatherings and outside of office all meet on pretty nearly equal terms; but the subordinates whose position does not entitle them to bow to the representative of the Queen are left out in the cold. It cannot but be exceedingly painful to many whose character and education are equal to the best, to find themselves, by the rigid rules of society, cut off from friendly intercourse with their neighbours.

In English homes in India, as in other respects, there is a growing tendency to assimilate India to England—sometimes, as it appears to me, to an unwise extent. Were it not for the punkah swaying to and fro over our head, and the presence of dark-skinned servants, when in Calcutta, one might often imagine oneself in a home in England. English carpets are hiding the clean and neat-looking mats that were once universal. Stencilled patterns on the walls above the darker dado are becoming common instead of the whitewashed or simply tinted walls. Ordinary dishes are supplanting the once loved curries and *Ledgeri*, or rice and *dhall* (a kind of pulse) boiled together. Ladies seeing the *Queen* and other books of fashion only three weeks after they are published, do not wait, as many do in the county towns of England, to see some of the more forward adapt the newest style, but at once go to the extreme, lest

by the time they have had their dresses made the fashion should again change. Far more commonly than was the case a few years ago, in the evening gentlemen parade in the abomination of modern society, the chimney-pot hat; though at present, excepting new arrivals, gloves are not commonly worn by them. It is amusing to see in old pictures, Indian missionaries wearing the dress coat and silk hat when preaching under a tree to a crowd of semi-nude Hindus. This certainly is not the mode at present in vogue. During the hot season men of all classes wear white trousers, not because they are cool, but because they are clean, and thin tweed jackets. During the day, all sensible men who have to go out into the open air wear helmets of pith or cork.

I am decidedly of opinion that in eating and drinking most Europeans act very unwisely. In a climate where temperance in both these respects is called for, and where there is an abundance of vegetables and fruit of many kinds, there is intemperance. It is my firm conviction that a great many who fall victims, as they think to the climate, really fall victims to their own foolishness. Many English people have three heavy meals in the day. At breakfast there is fish, chops, cutlets, omelets, eggs, toast, &c.; at tiffin (lunch) there are chops, steaks, curry and rice, puddings, &c.; at dinner in the evening a long course concludes the day's work. As to drinking, there is even greater foolishness. Many in the hot season take beer at breakfast and tiffin, with pegs (i.e. brandy and soda-water) between, and in the evening beer, spirits, wine. Many gentlemen, who would feel insulted if you hinted that they were

not temperate, take half a bottle of spirits a day, in addition to beer, &c. I am speaking not of drunkards, but of those who through the habitual use of these things take as much as I have mentioned without apparently being any the worse for it. It is sad to see young men drawn into a society where such customs prevail. There is not much drinking in hotels or public houses; but there is a great deal in private houses and in "chummeries," as they are called—i.e. houses where single gentlemen live together. These are very numerous in Calcutta. Four or more gentlemen take a house and have a set of servants to cater for them; no housekeeper being required, as the head servant (khansamah) exercises a general control over the food, &c., and the sirdar bearer, the head bearer or house servant, takes charge of the house. Where a steady set live together, this is a comfortable arrangement for bachelors; but where they are not steady, this style of living proves most hurtful to character.

The climate of Calcutta calls for a word of notice. Formerly it was called the "grave of Europeans." Years ago, when a student in a civil service class asked the teacher why promotion was more rapid in Bengal than in any other province, the answer was very simple: "Because there are more deaths there." But it seems to me that it is a case of "giving a dog a bad name and then hanging him." The ordinary death-rate is not usually higher than it is in many towns in England; but this statement needs the qualification, that a good many Europeans who live on the passage, or soon after their arrival at home, whilst nearly all Europeans leave before they grow

very old. But I believe that a good part of the mortality of Europeans can be clearly traced to the intemperance I have spoken of above.

The year is naturally divided into three seasons—the cold, hot, and rainy seasons. For three months, *i.e.* from the middle of November to the middle of February, the climate is simply perfect. The sky is bright and cloudless, whilst a cool fresh wind is almost constantly blowing. During these months the air acts as a splendid tonic, so that after a few days the weakness and weariness of the rainy season are almost forgotten. Though the season is called cold, it must not be imagined that it is at all like an English winter. During the day the thermometer rises to about 70° , but in the early morning it falls to about 56° . After a few years' residence in India, the body becomes weakened and the pores of the skin so open, owing to the excessive perspiration, that one can enjoy the comfort of an overcoat, and occasionally the cheerful heat of a fire. In most houses in Calcutta there are no fireplaces; but where there is one, a fire will be lighted for about a fortnight in January. As I was a fortunate person in this respect, in order to enjoy the semblance of home-life on Christmas and New Year's Eve we lighted a fire, and the first year or two after our arrival in India opened the glass sashes to make the fire bearable; but after a few years we could enjoy the fire even with closed windows.

Following the cold comes the hot season, *i.e.* from February 15th to June 15th. During these months the thermometer registers from 85 to 105 degrees. This is rather too warm; but as Calcutta is only

take leave of the bodies, and the paper feels cold and sodden. Boots taken off at night are covered with green mould before morning. The most enthusiastic admirer of India cannot say much in favour of the climate during this time. Mark Tapley would have found it hard to be jolly during October in Calcutta. It is the season for fever, dysentery, &c., and other cruel diseases. Happily it soon passes away, and with the beginning of November the wind occasionally blows from the N W, and as this increases in force, it drives away the hot and moist atmosphere which has been trying the health and temper of the luckless souls who have been compelled to vegetate in the plains. As an instance of the regularity of the seasons, I may just note that I have known for three years in succession the first rain to fall about twelve o'clock at noon of the 15th of June the nominal date of the commencement of this season.

It is customary for Europeans to arrive in India during the cold season, and nothing appears to surprise them more than the continued sunshine. As friends fresh from England who have been my guests have greeted me with the commonplace remark, "What a beautiful morning!" I have allowed it to pass for a few days, and then have gently hinted that the same remark would hold good for months to come. I have known some whose whole frame seemed so excited with this superlative brightness that they could scarcely get to sleep at night. Lest, however, some should imagine that India at this season is absolutely perfect, I may mention the fact that we have at times terribly heavy rains, and that at this season, too, mosquitos are both more numerous and

about ninety miles from the seas, when the sun goes down a sea breeze springs up, so that, unlike the inland country, the nights are generally bearable. During this season we have frequent storms, "Nor'-westers" as they are termed. After a perspiring day we see a most clearly marked, semi-circular-cloud gather, and in a short time it is on us. Doors and windows are carefully closed, because before the rain, which is so welcome, falls, dense clouds of dust come—so dense, in fact, that one cannot see the horse's head from the vehicle if we are caught when driving. But the cool and fresh feeling of the atmosphere as the rain comes down in torrents must be realized in order to know what is meant by "cooling showers in a desert land." Although the heat is great, it is generally remarked that Europeans enjoy better health in the hot than during the cold season.

From June 15th to November 15th is the rainy season. For the first month or so the rains are welcomed because of the new life that is seen in the gardens, and for the pleasant fall in the temperature. During these weeks slight showers only fall, and the atmosphere is not saturated with moisture; but during July and August the rains come in earnest. It is not a continuous downpour; black clouds and a heavy rainfall alternate with bright and sunny skies. By the beginning of September the ground is like a soaked sponge, and as the rains moderate and the sun beats upon the earth, the malaria rises, and the atmosphere is like a vapour-bath. Collars are limp before they can be fastened. Perspiration exudes from every pore of the skin, but the atmosphere is too moist to absorb it. The backs of books

take leave of the bodies, and the paper feels damp and sodden. Boots taken off at night are covered with green mould before morning. The most enthusiastic admirer of India cannot say much in favour of the climate during this time. Mark Tapley would have found it hard to be jolly during October in Calcutta. It is the season for fever, dysentery, &c., and other cruel diseases. Happily it soon passes away, and with the beginning of November the wind occasionally blows from the N.W., and as this increases in force, it drives away the hot and moist atmosphere which has been trying the health and temper of the luckless souls who have been compelled to vegetate in the plains. As an instance of the regularity of the seasons, I may just note that I have known for three years in succession the first rain to fall about twelve o'clock at noon of the 15th of June, the nominal date of the commencement of this season.

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more vicious than during any other part of the year. Even India provides some drawbacks to its many excellences.



WATER-CARRIERS.

In a description of European life in India, a word must be said about servants. Upon this question

there is as great diversity of opinion as on the same question in every land. Moving about in this country, one hears a great deal said about the increasing difficulty of obtaining good servants; and the correspondence in the newspapers indicates a widespread sense of dissatisfaction. On the other hand, there are those who speak most gratefully of faithful service, and manifest the deepest interest in and affection for their servants. Precisely the same experience is found in India. There are some people who have not a good word for the servant class. They say they are lazy, dirty, untruthful, dishonest. And such people speak the absolute truth so far as their experience goes. But it is not by any means the whole truth. The servants of Europeans come from the lowest classes; and in a city like Calcutta are many who cannot get employment in small places, where their antecedents are known. And further, the natives cling together, and speak freely of their employers. When therefore it is known that a master or mistress is unkind, harsh, inconsiderate, cruel, the better class of servants will not serve them. But, on the other hand, there are servants as clean, honest, kind, and industrious as one could wish them to be. From what I have seen I can say that I could not wish to be better served than I have been for many years by most of the men who have been in my employment. It is true that if a servant does not wish to do certain work because he considers it does not properly belong to his position, he will plead that his *caste* forbids him to do it, whereas frequently his caste does nothing of the kind. On the other hand, it is perfectly true that some Europeans, through igno-

rance, indifference, or selfishness, will order their servants to do work which they would rather starve than do; and these nominally Christian masters will beat a servant for not doing what he believes his religion positively forbids. Where masters are fairly kind and thoughtful, there are many servants to be found who are really trustworthy and faithful



A BENGALI WASHERMAN.

The great bone of contention between masters and servants is what is known in India as "dustoori," and in England as commission. It is part of the Bengali servant's creed that it is his privilege, his undoubted right, to obtain a percentage out of every rupee that his master spends. And, as a rule, they succeed in getting it. The master calls it "stealing;"

the servant says, "No, I am not a thief, though I take my *dustoori*." Men who would not on any account steal in the ordinary use of the word, will claim this commission. But there are others who doubtless will steal, and that very cleverly. It is a common custom with those who are most anxious to have pure milk, for the cow to be brought to the door of the house to be milked, and for one of the family to stand by to see the operation. The man will hold his brass milk pail upside down to show that it is empty; but if the watcher's back is turned but for a moment, out comes a wet cloth that was round the milkman's waist, and the filthy water it contained is wrung into the milk vessel. I have known many such tricks as this resorted to, which go to prove that however careful an Englishman may be, he will most certainly be outwitted in the long run by the intelligent natives of India. On the other hand, where there is anything approaching kindly feeling manifested, good and pure milk can be purchased; and, from many, true and faithful service obtained. I can say that, as far as my personal experience is concerned, I have had as good and trustworthy servants in India as in England.

When people unfamiliar with India hear of the large number of servants in an Anglo-Indian house, they imagine that luxurious and costly living is the rule. But this is by no means the case. A set of about eight Indian servants do the work of two in England, and cost little if any more. As the cook-room is always at a little distance from the house, so that the heat and smell may be avoided, ladies seldom enter it; and the servants mostly live at their own

homes, or in rooms quite separate from the house in which they serve. A cook room in a house where the doors leading to the different rooms are always open would be an intolerable nuisance. Excepting Christian ayahs, or nurses, the servants not only live out of the house, but also provide their own food, so that the low salary paid to them covers all the expense connected with them. Strange to say, there



COOK IN THE COOK ROOM.

are few Calcutta-born people who act as servants to Europeans;—they come from Orissa and the north-western province of India, work for a couple of years or so, and then pay a visit of a few months to their wives and families. When away on leave they secure a substitute; and it is a point of honour with the substitute, however much the master may desire it, not to remain when the old servant returns.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PEOPLE GENERALLY.

WE now pass on to describe the people generally who are included under the general title *native*. It is hard to say why this word should be so commonly used, since all of us are natives of some place or other; but as the term is used in a somewhat disparaging sense, it is not to be wondered at that the educated Bengalis should sometimes resent it. Our Christians seldom speak of themselves as *native* Christians, but rather as Bengali Christians—certainly a far more appropriate and respectful appellation.

In appearance many of the Bengalis are exceedingly like Europeans. There is no doubt whatever that the higher castes, who have not intermarried with the aborigines whom they found in India, and of whose country they took possession, belong to the great Aryan family;—their language, mythology, customs, all point to a common ancestry with that of the branches of this great family in Europe, as the Greeks, Italians, Germans, Celts, &c. Frequently I have noticed faces exactly like those of people in England. The lower castes who for the most part are a mixed race, being the descendants of the Hindus and the original inhabitants of the country,

differ more widely from the European type. But if any one expects to find people at all approaching the



A GROUP OF THE NATIVES OF INDIA

negro, he must not go to India for them. He will find as many or perhaps more in London or Liverpool

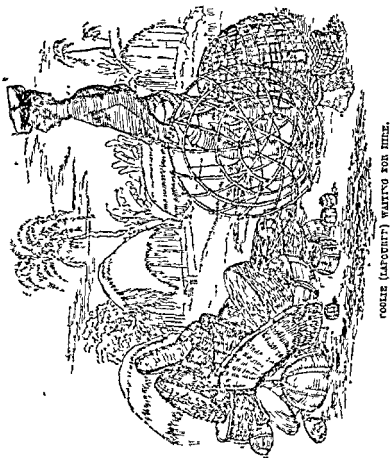
than he will in Calcutta. And yet many English people continually speak to and of the natives of India as *niggers*, when in truth they are no more like "niggers" than themselves. To those who know well and love the Bengalis, it is most painful to see the contempt that some Europeans seem to cherish for them.

In colour there is perhaps greater diversity than in England. The highest type of beauty of complexion in Bengal is "golden." Lakshmi, the goddess of prosperity, and Durgā, the favourite goddess of the province, are always represented, whether in pictures or images, as having a bright, gold-coloured skin. And this is the colour of the higher castes who have not been much exposed to the sun. I have seen many far fairer than the olive-tinted Italians who wander through our streets, discoursing sweet music from their organs. Others, again, are of an olive tint; and others, mostly of the lower castes, are very dark. But though their hair is black it is never woolly, and, as a rule, the skin is so beautifully smooth and transparent that one might imagine they were accustomed from their birth to use Pears' wonderful soap, or were made "beautiful for ever" by Madame Rachel's marvellous method. "Golden" is one of the many names or epithets of Durgā; and much as we pride ourselves on our fair skin, the Bengali wife would not at all like her children to be white. It is not so much because the negroes are black that they are objects of terror to our little ones, as the fact that they are unaccustomed to them, and because the threat of "a black man coming" is used to frighten them. When an English child arrives in Calcutta, if it has not seen

the native *āyāhs*. On board, it shrinks with the utmost terror from them, exactly in the same manner as I have seen Bengali children scream and kick to get away from my white face. But when they become familiar with their dark faces, they are more ready to go to them than to a strange white-faced person.

The dress of the people is most various, but it is a capital indication of the nationality, and often the religious position, of its owner. The poor people generally wear white calico; the men have two strips, each about two and a half yards long, one of which, the *dhuti*, is for the loins, the other, the *chādar*, for the upper part of the body; the women have one long strip of five and a half yards, called a *sāri*. In the hot season the men use the *chādar* as a turban, leaving the upper part of the body exposed; the women fasten the *sāri* round their waist, and then bring the remainder over the head. It cannot be said that this is altogether a decent dress, as one side of the breast is generally exposed; and when the wind happens to blow, the light material is carried with it, leaving the body rather too much undraped. The borders of these strips of calico are generally coloured; but the widows cannot wear a coloured border. The coolies in the streets altogether dispense with the *chādar*, and are content to wear only the cloth round their loins. The clerks and middle classes usually wear a *chaplan*, a garment somewhat like a frock coat, fastened on the side of the breast. A Hindu can at once be distinguished from a Mussulmān, as the Hindu tucks his *dhuti* on the right-hand side, and the Mussulmān on the left. An amusing story may be told, illustrating the power of clothes, and also

showing that, after all, there is a good deal in a name. A Christian convert in Government employ, anxious to obtain a higher post in his office, was told that it could not be given to a Bengali, but



FOOLIE (LAFORNT) WAITING FOR HIRE.

was reserved for a European. "If that is all, and I am otherwise fit for it," he said, "I will be a European." So off he went to a tailor, and was rigged out in European costume, and at the same

time he gave himself an Anglicized form of his Bengali name. After this change of dress and name he obtained the appointment, and he held it until his death, which happened a few years ago. Though the ordinary dress of the Bengali gentleman consists of white trousers and a chapān, made of some quiet-coloured alpaca or tweed, on festival days he adorns himself in the gayest colours of silk and satin. Bright blues, greens, scarlets, and yellows are not at all too striking for these occasions. The Hindus have yet to learn that the gay plumage which adorns the males of the animal world, and which the dandies of uncivilized countries still affect, amongst the more civilized peoples is a monopoly of the ladies.

As a rule the Hindus do not wear shoes or stockings; but amongst the educated classes there is a nondescript kind of dress coming into fashion that is neither European nor Asiatic, but a mixture of both. They frequently wear the ordinary loose dhuti for trousers, and an English shirt, not tucked in, for the chādar;—a white shirt in summer and a coloured flannel one in the cold season. They also wear stockings and shoes. Stockings are all right when the trousers hide the upper part, but they certainly look very strange on men whose legs are exposed from the knees, and when the garters are openly displayed. A story is told of a certain Chief Justice of Calcutta who was greatly scandalized as he saw the naked legs and unshod feet of his dusky brethren in the streets. Turning to a learned brother who had come to meet him at the ship which had brought him from England, he said: "We must certainly try to improve all this." I fear this good man's sympathetic nature

would be disturbed were he to revisit India to-day, to find that after the lapse of so many years the people generally go barefooted as of old. The greatest innovation, I think, that can be pointed out, is the almost universal use of umbrellas. English manufacturers must have made a good thing out of our connection with India, as annually many



A BRHMAN IN SECULAR EMPLOYMENT.

thousands of these articles are imported, all classes of the community now seeming to regard an umbrella as a necessity. At the commencement of the rainy season the servants put up a claim for a new umbrella the article that once was the exclusive luxury of the rich and in some districts the sign of royalty. It is a question for the curious, What becomes of the old

about eating with men of other castes as though they were ordinary Hindus. In addition to all these there are the Parsis, or Fire worshippers from Persia, who, when their country was conquered by the Mahomedans, took refuge in India. There are a good number of Jews, many of whom retain their peculiar dress, and whilst speaking the language of the people amongst whom they live also learn Hebrew at their schools. They remain a distinct class in India as in England.

In a large city like Calcutta we have a number of people from all parts of the country. For example, when the new trade of pipe laying for gas and water had to be done Orissas from Orissa came in, and not a single Bengali is engaged in this work. For road making and for sweeping the streets some of the aboriginal tribes from Santal and other hill districts have been induced to settle in the city, whilst the servants either come from the North West Provinces or from Orissa. As it is contrary to a Hindu's religious notions to touch beef, and in fact most of the food eaten by Europeans the cooks and servants who wait at table, with a very few exceptions, are Mahomedans. The tailoring and dressmaking, the brick laying and painting work is also done by Mahomedans. As the Hindus follow the trades and callings of their ancestors, they could not take kindly to any new form of industry. Men who were free from these caste prejudices have therefore had a decided advantage over them.

A very common libel on the Bengalis is that they are dirty. As far as my observation goes I do not know any people more cleanly in their habits. As a rule, the Hindus bathe every day of the year, and as

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soon as they have bathed they wash the clothes they have worn the last twenty-four hours, which, when dry, are ready to wear the next day. If there is a river within a reasonable distance, the people prefer to bathe in it, because a bath in a river not only cleanses their bodies, but is believed also to wash away their sins. If there is no river convenient, they bathe in a tank; or if this cannot be had, they pour water over their bodies. They do not use soap, but in the cold season, immediately before their



GRINDING CORN.

bath, anoint the body with cocoa-nut oil. If soon after this ceremony they crowd into a room, the smell of oil is rather strong than pleasant. Their cooking vessels and brass plates and dishes are scrupulously clean. Hinduism has certainly taught the people cleanliness, which is said to be next to godliness.

For the most part the Hindus are vegetarians. In Bengal they live on rice and vegetables made into a sort of stew with hot spices, which is known to English people as curry. Those who can afford it take

fish, though some Hindus are so scrupulous that they will not even eat fish, because it involves the destruction of life. Occasionally they eat a little goat's flesh or venison. When a goat has been sacrificed to Kāli it becomes sacred, and a Hindu then may freely eat it; but as the people are mostly very poor, they cannot afford often to indulge in this luxury. It is for some religious purpose that a goat is sacrificed, as the fulfilment of a vow when a son is born, or when there has been recovery from illness, or some special benefit obtained. Of late years, however, religious butchers have appeared. In their shops is an image, or in some cases a picture, of Kāli, before which the animals are slain. This simple process sanctifies the meat, and the people who could not purchase a whole kid can buy a pound or two of this holy meat and eat it. As a rule the people are teetotalers too. Lately, as greater facilities have been given them for procuring spirits, the number of drinkers has greatly increased. It is a cruel shame that a Christian Government should assist in the moral injury of its subjects. But it is only too true that spirit-shops are much more numerous than they were; and it is equally certain that if the people generally were consulted they would close all, or nearly all, that are now open. Once in my house a meeting was held to protest against the granting of a spirit license, on the ground that there were four others within a very short distance. The collector heard all we had to say, and granted license next day.

In eating their food, though the right hand takes the place of knife and fork and a spoon, the pe

soon as they have bathed they wash the clothes they have worn the last twenty-four hours, which, when dry, are ready to wear the next day. If there is a river within a reasonable distance, the people prefer to bathe in it, because a bath in a river not only cleanses their bodies, but is believed also to wash away their sins. If there is no river convenient, they bathe in a tank; or if this cannot be had, they pour water over their bodies. They do not use soap, but in the cold season, immediately before their



GRINDING CURRY.

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A BATHING-PLACE PROTECTED FROM ALLIGATORS.

CHAPTER V.

A TALK ABOUT INSECTS, REPTILES, ETC.

IN India and tropical countries generally, one seems to be in nature's wholesale establishment, where her transactions are on a large scale, rather than in the retail department of England and the temperate zones generally. When the sun lifts his head above the horizon, you feel his force immediately, and have to guard yourself against his fierce heat; for nearly all the cases of sunstroke and the various known ways of death received before 7 a.m. When the winds blow, you are fully aware of the fact from the clouds of dust

they raise, and from the rattling of the doors and windows. When it rains there is seldom any necessity to ask whether the clouds are pouring out their treasures, for it is almost literally true there "that it never rains but it pours." And in like manner when we think of the insect and reptile pests, we find that nature is most prolific.

In reading this chapter, I wish particularly to say that it will convey quite a false impression if it leads any one to imagine that these small causes of annoyance are always present;—it is only as one sits down quietly to think of and mass them, that the amount appears so large. How often it happens when we hear a story of accident, or spiritual appearance, or in fact anything startling, at once by the law of association we are led to think of similar events in our own experience, or in the experience of our friends. Circumstances long forgotten rise up vividly to memory, and one might almost fancy from the stories that are told, that one's life had been full of these unusual events. But this is far from being the case; the events narrated have been spread over a long lifetime. So it is with the subject of this chapter. The annoyance was not perpetual, and some of them have probably never been felt by many who have lived for many years in India.

The first of the insect tribe that calls for notice is the flea. I am aware that these interesting creatures are not unknown in England, and that they are capable of taming and domestication, of being harnessed to carriages, &c. I was greatly interested in an English watering-place to see an enterprising trainer of fleas advertising for one that had escaped

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sprinkled the floors with carbolic acid, kerosine oil, and other beautifully scented disinfectants, in the hope that we might make it uncomfortable for them, but as far as I could see it afforded no real benefit. They retired as suddenly as they came, and I confess I was not sorry when they departed. I do not know that they are more common in Bengali houses than in the houses of Europeans. I ought, perhaps, to say that except on these occasions when they came in wholesale consignments, we scarcely saw one. Fortunately for us, they do not form a constant, but only an occasional annoyance.

Next to fleas come "Norfolk Howards," as I understand they are euphemistically called in England. These are very common indeed in Bengali houses, and in the godowns or out-offices of the servants, but not at all common in those of Europeans. Having no paper on the walls, there are few places in which they can hide. And as the mattresses (of course feather beds are unknown in India) are taken out to be aired two or three times a week, the place is much too lively for these slow and nasty creatures. But one is sometimes a little horrified to see two or three of them crawling about the spotlessly white garments of some Bengali gentleman who may be seated in one's study. After his departure a good search is made, lest perchance one or two may have availed themselves of his visit to make a change of domicile. But bad though the ordinary European Norfolk Howard may be, there is a species peculiar to India far worse. These are about four times the size of the ordinary insect, and are supplied with wings. In Calcutta itself they are not frequently found; in fact I lived there for

years without seeing one, or even hearing of them. But once when preaching I smelt one near, and found it had settled on my head. It was almost impossible to go on talking. My first experience of them in any numbers was at a small travellers' bungalow at the foot of the Himalayhs. In India, as



A TRAVELLERS' BUNGALOW

there are hotels only in the large cities, along the most frequented roads the Government erect small houses called Dak Bungalows, in which there are generally a couple of bedrooms, and a couple of sitting rooms. The furniture is not very grand, consisting of a table, chairs, and bedsteads. A servant is in attendance, ready to prepare a meal at

the shortest notice. As the carriage in which the traveller is riding draws near the house, he sees the servant chasing a chicken—a shrill cry is heard, and he knows that a victim has been killed, which in about half an hour he will see hot upon his table. A small charge is made for the use of the house, and in some of them one can be very comfortable:

After a journey of nineteen hours in a carriage that had been dragged by galloping ponies over a rough road, our party reached this house tired and hungry. We ordered dinner, and were sitting down to our soup when we became conscious of a most unpleasant smell. One of our number, being an experienced traveller, knew what had befallen us. "Flying bugs!" he cried, and in a few moments the table swarmed with them. The lamp had guided the Philistines to their prey, and I confess they proved too sharp for us. We tried to eat a little soup, but it was impossible; hungry as we were, we cleared away from the table and went dinnerless to bed, glad to get safely within the mosquito curtain we had fortunately brought with us. My next experience was at a station about thirty miles distant from Calcutta, where I was a visitor for a fortnight. For several evenings it was impossible to have any light in the dining-room during dinner. All the lights were burning brightly in the adjoining room, where plates and saucers of water were placed on the tables, which proved fatal to many of these abominable insects. We managed to eat our dinner in a dim light without any accident. Occasionally I have seen or smelt one at other times, but not more than

of churning the sea. A great mountain offered to be the churning-stick, and the king of snakes the churning-rope; but what could be found strong enough for a pivot on which this mighty mountain



VISHNU AS A TORTOISE.

could be made to move? In their difficulty Vishnu came to the rescue, and as a tortoise sank to the bottom of the sea. When all was ready, the gods seized the tail and the demons the head of the snake, and

the mountain began to revolve. After several objects that figure largely in Hindu legends came forth, the goddess Lakshmi or Sri, a perfect Venus, appeared, and with her the physician of the gods, holding a golden cup of nectar in his hand. Lakshmi was at once chosen by Vishnu as his reward. Now arose a quarrel: the demons demanded a share of the water as they had done a good share of the work. Vishnu again proved a helper. Assuming for a moment the form of his lovely bride, he ran away to attract the demons; and whilst they were engaged in the chase of a phantom, the gods quaffed the water of life and thus became strong enough to master their hereditary foes.

3. *The Boar Incarnation.*

In this strange form Vishnu came to earth to recover the most sacred books—the Vedas—which had been lost in the flood. It is by the knowledge of these Vedas that man can attain to the highest blessedness of heaven. They are the especial property of the Brāhmans—they only are permitted to read, or hear them read; and as the knowledge they convey is necessary to the attainment of the highest good, it follows of course that in this life the low-caste people have no immediate hope of reaching it. They have, however, this consolation, that if in the lower castes they do their duty after living a great many times on earth, they may at length be born as Brāhmans, know the Vedas, and by this means, after thousands of years, reach heaven's greatest bliss.

4. *The Man-lion Incarnation.*

This is a most striking illustration of the mutual hostility of the gods, and, with such a story as this,

It is astonishing how men can for a moment profess to believe these various deities to be but manifestations of the One: and further, it is illustrative of the teaching which leads the people to believe that



VISHNU AS A MAN EATER.

they must acknowledge all the many gods of the Pantheon.

. There was a Ling of the demons named Hiran-yakasipu, who had received as a boon from Brahmā,

in return for his devotion, the promise that no animal should slay him, that he should die neither by night or day, in heaven or in earth, nor by fire, water, or sword. Protected by this vast shield, he attacked the gods in heaven, wresting their treasures from them and usurping their functions. At length, his rapacity becoming unbearable, they proceeded to Vishnu for help. It so happened that this disturber of the peace had a son named Prahlāda who was a most devout worshipper of Vishnu, and the earnestness of the lad's faith simply drove the father to distraction. He forbade the son to reverence this god, seeing that all the gods were now under his control. But though recourse was had to the severest measures to lead him to recant, the boy remained unmoved. At length the father, who had been told by his son that Vishnu was everywhere present as the protector of his followers, striking a pillar, said, "Is he here?" He had no sooner spoken than the god appeared in the form of a being half man and half lion, and tore him to pieces. The promise of Brahmā had been kept in the letter though violated in the spirit. Vishnu came as no ordinary animal, and was neither man nor beast; he slew him in the evening, which is neither day nor night; the event happened under the eaves of the house, which place is said to be neither in heaven nor on earth; and he tore him to pieces with his hands, so that he was not injured by fire, water, or the sword. With such a story as this, it is not to be wondered at that the people should feel that it is not enough for them to be devoted in the worship of one only of the gods; they must try to be on good terms with all.